DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 200 698 UD 021 363

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TITLE Bilingual Program Project SELL. Final Report.
INSTITUTION Community School District 27, Queens, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (ED), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 31 Jul 80
NOTE 21p.; For related documents see UD 021 356, UD 021 358, UD 021 360, UD 021 362, UD 021 368, and UD 021 382-383.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; *English (Second Language); Heterogeneous Grouping; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; Mainstreaming; Multicultural Education; Peer Influence; Program Descriptions; *Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Role Models; *Spanish Speaking
IDENTIFIERS Elementary Secondary Education Act Title VII; *Limited English Speaking; New York (New York)

ABSTRACT

Project SELL (Spanish/English Language Learning) served 344 limited English speaking (LEP) and 40 non-limited English speaking (non-LEP) students from intermediate and junior high schools in Queens, New York. Non-LEP students acted as role models for LEP students to assist in the improvement of English language skills while LEP students acted as role models in Spanish language and culture classes. Bilingual support personnel were available for LEP students. LEP students who achieved proficiency in English were transferred out of the program while receiving additional academic support services. LEP students were mainstreamed in all subject areas. A team of guidance counselors and family assistants supported pupil adjustment and parent involvement. The program was evaluated through a questionnaire which asked school principals to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Project SELL and through evaluator observations. The evaluator found that the program operated in a superior manner. (MK)

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APR 1 - 1981

ED200698

FINAL REPORT
FOR
BILINGUAL PROGRAM
PROJECT SELL

JULY 31, 1980

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BILINGUAL PROGRAM

PROJECT SELL

Prepared by:

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Project SELL (Spanish/English Language Learning) is a Title VII federally funded bilingual program housed in one District 27 intermediate school and two of the district's junior high schools.

The program identified the following four components:

COMPONENT I

LEP and Non-LEP students reverse role models while sharing experiences, thus promoting mutual acceptance and respect while preventing segregation of children.

In the official class, Non-LEP students serve as "role models" for LEP students assisting in the improvement of English language skills.

In the Spanish language and culture classes, LEP students serve as "role models" for Non-LEP students. Non-LEP children learning a new language share experiences related to functioning in an alien language. Both groups will develop a broadened understanding of the language and cultural heritage of the United States and the dominant country.

COMPONENT II

LEP students, while developing English and Spanish communication skills, will have the support of personnel proficient in both languages and trained in the methodology of bilingual education.

Articulation among programs is a District priority. Therefore, as the LEP student progresses through the program he/she is carefully monitored so that those students who achieve language proficiency may be transferred out.

Reading, Math and Oral Communication Laboratories under Title I and/or PSEN provide services to sustain the academic achievement of children who leave the program.

COMPONENT III

LEP students are mainstreamed in all other subject areas. Support and reinforcement in the dominant language is provided as needed for conceptual development. This minimizes isolation as a factor in limiting language development of LEP students.

COMPONENT IV

To achieve total impact in the educational process for LEP students, a supportive service team of guidance counselors and family assistants will effect pupil adjustment and performance while reaching out to the

children, their teachers and parents.

The 1979-1980 school year is the first year of funding/operation for Project SELL in what is planned as two-year program. The district proposal indicates that by the end of year two it is anticipated that the program will be fully operable and institutionalized and will be continued without federal funding.

The program serves almost 484 children. Of these, 344 pupils are LEP with the remainder being non-LEP. The eligible non-LEP students were those not identified as being in need of services, but who chose to participate. The inclusion of these pupils helps to reduce isolation and segregation of LEP students.

The pupils participating in the program are scheduled to participate in a reading language arts component for five periods (days) weekly.

The program was well organized in all three participating schools (one of the schools was not able to commence program operation until November due to late site change).

Building Administration

The principals of the three schools--each a large educational enterprise--were knowledgeable about the programs and expressed positive feeling concerning them. In accordance with standard practice, in each building direct

responsibility for program supervision was delegated to an assistant principal.

In all cases, the assistant principals in charge of the bilingual programs were found to be knowledgeable professionals who had spent a substantial amount of time involved in scheduling and programming so that the project got off to a good start. The assistant principals organized and maintained teacher and master schedules and were entirely familiar with a majority of pupils in the bilingual programs. Although there was no evidence that the assistant principals were themselves bilingual, there was much evidence of respect of staff and students demonstrating that they were caring, capable, and productive in their task of program implementation and supervision.

There is broad professional agreement that the building principal is a key element in the areas of program development, innovation, program success, staff and student morale, etc.

Accordingly, a survey was developed by the evaluators to enable them to examine the perceptions of principals.

The responses of the principals were useful in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the bilingual program for follow-up discussion with the principals and for use during interviews with parents, pupils, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

The questionnaire developed asked principals to identify strong aspects and aspects in need of improvement for the bilingual programs in the areas of:

Program Planning
Curriculum Design
Facilities, Supplies and Equipment
Testing Program
Student Selection
Student Scheduling/Instructed Time
Student Attendance
Student Attitude
Orientation and Involvement of Parents
Perception of District Program Coordinator
Perception of Teachers
Perception of Paraprofessionals
Program of Supervision of Staff
Staff Orientation Program
Staff In-service Program
Overall Bilingual Program
Level of Support form District Office
Other Comments or Perceptions of Program

A summary of responses of principals follows.

I. Program

Planning: Guidelines are clearly established, and permit flexibility. Hispanic students are not segregated,

and individual students' needs are met. Lab tests proved to be accurate determinants of diagnosis of language ability.

Need for improvement: Testing should be done earlier to provide earlier and smoother start of school year. More training and structure should be provided for teachers. "Fragmentation (occurs) as one teacher is expected to service the need of students in many grades and classes."

Curriculum Design: Small groups and individual help, plus enrichment and enhancement of children's concepts of self and cultural identity are strongest points.

Need for improvement: Personnel need more training in curriculum. Curriculum and materials in Spanish are needed which relate to regular program instruction. "Pupil retention of various skills may be poor because they are instructed in different areas during their three weekly visitation periods."

Facilities, Supplies and Equipment: A variety of materials have been ordered or made available for the program, and are excellent aids in providing instruction.

Need for improvement: One response had left blank "Strong Aspects" and stated that there is very little material available, and that the quality of materials is poor. Another response said that materials which were ordered have not yet been received (as of November, when

questionnaire was distributed). Some materials use a vocabulary which is unfamiliar to pupils. Comment also was made that teachers should have more input into selection of materials.

Testing: A good diagnostic tool which provides teacher with an assessment of student needs. It is an established program with a systematic approach.

Need for improvement: Too much testing, too time consuming. Testing results should be made available earlier. Three responses felt that the testing may not be appropriate to the program.

II. STUDENTS

Selection of Students for Program: Needy youngsters are identified. ASPIRA guidelines are followed, and students are proficient in Spanish. "Class organization permits Hispanics and non-Hispanics to work together and profit from an exchange of talents and abilities."

Need for improvement: Three responses in this area:
(1) A child may be deficient in both languages, yet take the LAB exam and be found ineligible for the program;
(2) The program tends to isolate Hispanic students;
(3) LAB 20th percentile not completely valid re: dominance of children, greater student profile needed at initiation of program.

Scheduling Instruction Time for Students: Students receive remediation and instruction in regular classes. Scheduling is done to avoid conflict with regular classroom schedules. Students are on regular schedule of three times weekly in program.

Need for improvement: Students miss work in tax-levy class. "Pull-out" tends to disrupt home room class program. Proposal guidelines limit students' consistency within major subject areas.

Attendance of Students: Attendance is excellent, with lab attendance increasing general school attendance because students enjoy lab. Good follow of absences with Family Assistant.

Need for improvement: Some students still have consistent poor attendance pattern. Need for "orientation program to emphasize to parents the need for regular pupil attendance at school in some instances."

Attitude of Students: Students are motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy the lab. Small group fosters individual attention and helps develop a more positive self-image.

Need for improvement: Of the five responses to this questionnaire, there were two comments in this area: (1) students should work harder; and (2) "There is a need for regular teachers to develop a more positive attitude

about the program which would in turn filter down to all the students."

III. PARENTS

Orientation and level of parental involvement: Workshops are offered and parents who attend are interested.

Need for improvement: Overall statements of need for more ongoing parent interest and involvement. Attendance generally is poor. Elementary school parents are more interested than parents at other levels.

IV. STAFFING

Coordinator: Coordinators are identified as knowledgeable and interested, provide good workshops.

Need for improvement: All responses commented on the need for more visits.

Teachers: Knowledgeable, relate well to students.

Need for improvement: Need more assistants, other personnel. Need more training.

Paraprofessionals: Cooperative, creative and relate well to students.

Need for improvement: More paraprofessionals are needed. More training of paras requested. One response states they "should also be assigned to bilingual self-contained tax levy class so as to better meet diverse

needs of those students."

Program of Staff Supervision: Excellent communication and follow through, with formal and informal conferences scheduled. Supervisors relate well to staff and have good rapport with staff.

Need for improvement: Two comments are about the need for the supervisor to have more time for adequate supervision. One comment cites linkage problem with regular classroom teachers. Poor communication with regular classroom teachers, with resulting negative attitude of classroom teachers toward program.

Program of Staff Orientation: Staff has regular district meetings, conferences and workshops.

Need for improvement: Linkage is major problem, both because the Bilingual teacher may be unfamiliar with the regular curriculum, and because of negative attitudes of regular teachers about the value of the program in an English speaking environment.

In-Service Program: Monthly workshops are held. One comment states "very adequate for paraprofessionals."

Need for improvement: More training is needed, but not on school time since "children lose valuable instruction time." Once suggestion was made for intervisitation with other districts with heavier bilingual population to exchange ideas on other programs.

V. OVERALL PROGRAM

The program generally meets the needs of students, and works to prevent isolation from the general pupulation. The children benefit from the small group instruction.

Need for improvement: More teacher training is needed. There is a lack of consistency in guidelines as funding sources change yearly, and enrichment component may be available one year, and not the next. Service should be expanded and more personnel hired to meet needs of this population.

VI. LEVEL OF SUPPORT OFFERED BY DISTRICT OFFICE

Two of the five responses left "strong aspects" blank. Others see support as adequate, and coordinator visits as evidence of support.

Need for improvement: Coordinator's diverse assignments sometimes prevent her being reached when problems arise. Labs which were taken away should be replaced.

VII. OTHER COMMENTS OR PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAM FOR NYU EVALUATORS

One comment: "The program seems to build good relationships with the parents and so children develop a positive school attitude."

Need for improvement: Funding should be increased. "Guidelines should provide for children to receive service

after they pass LAB tests if we are to further strengthen pupil appreciation of their cultural heritage."

Teachers

The program in the three schools served is assigned a full time teacher in each building. In all cases the teachers are fully bilingual and exhibit excellent ability in both English and Spanish. The classroom performance of all three teachers is truly outstanding. Dealing with adolescent youngsters--universally often a control problem--poses absolutely no problem for these teachers. They are fully in control and have their rooms organized so that not control problem ever arose during the many hours the evaluator spent in each room. The three teachers are all experienced bilingual teachers, having been selected for and assigned to this program on the basis of superior performance elsewhere. All teachers are fully certified with extensive training in bilingual education.

The teachers engage in extensive lesson planning, including orientation and instruction of the paraprofessionals and are often in contact with their professional colleagues in the building in the interests of linkage and articulation.

Paraprofessionals

There is a full time paraprofessional (Educational Assistant) assigned to each teacher in the program. All of the paraprofessionals are suitably bilingual. While the paraprofessionals perform all the supportive tasks usually expected of the position, the majority of their time was observed to be appropriately involved in the instructional program working directly with children. The majority of the time this work takes the form of working with small groups or individual pupils to provide drill, practice and reinforcement of new work and/or skills introduced by the teacher.

At times it was observed that some paraprofessional had difficulty explaining syntax and grammatical structure to the pupils, although the teachers were observed providing instruction and orientation for the paras during planning sessions.

Guidance

The program enjoys the services of a half time bilingual guidance counselor in each of the three schools served.

In all instances, the guidance counselors are dedicated professionals who are truly bilingual and equally proficient in both languages.

It is evident that these counselors are perceived as able professionals by the entire administrative and teaching staffs and are perceived as available, approach-

able and helpful by the students.

The counselors interview each child in the program, review the achievement records of pupils enrolled in the programs and schedule counseling sessions as needed. They visit classrooms to observe students and to provide group guidance. They visit classrooms to observe students and to provide group guidance. They become involved with youngsters with attendance problems, deportment problems and even home and community problems. They present high school program members occupational information leading to career choices. During the discussions, interviews and program observations conducted by the evaluator, it was evident that the counselors are constantly sought out by students, staff members, parents and professionals of outside agencies dealing with children. While it is not possible to estimate the number of counselling contacts the counselors have during a year, it is obvious that they are busy, productive professionals who are strained to keep up with the needs of the population they serve. They have developed very worthwhile group guidance programs in such areas as: common adolescence problems, occupations, job applications, and dating/boy/girl/family relationships.

Family Assistants

The emphasis of the work of the family assistant is on pupil attendance. The family assistant is in constant contact with homes which she counsels parents and pupils regarding school attendance, problems, etc. She encourages parents to confer with teachers and helps to arrange such conferences.

The family assistant makes use of daily pupil-teacher sign-off sheets to obviate cutting and to emphasize good attendance and deportment.

On one typical day for which the evaluator analyzed the records, seven parents actually came into school for interviews and discussions and the family assistant's records demonstrated telephone contact with four other parents the prior evening.

The family assistant keeps a narrative log of all home visitations. She feels that there is excellent rapport with building administrative staff.

The family assistants comment that although they are supposed to limit contact to those enrolled in the program, they help all who are in need, often using free time.

From a review of the records, it is estimated that there were approximately four to five thousand separate contacts, visits, telephone consultations, and interviews during the year on the part of the family assistants.

District Office Involvement

District office staff, including the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent, as well as the Director of Reimbursable Programs, are interested in and enthusiastic about the bilingual programs. They are intimately familiar with programs, staffing, facilities, etc., far beyond what might be expected. They are known personally and individually to teachers and in some cases, to parents and children. Their attitude and involvement serve as an example to their non-bilingual professional colleagues.

The bilingual coordinator is a dedicated, conscientious, able educational leader who has completed an MA in bilingual education and a Professional Diploma in school administration. She is at the point of matriculating for a Ph. D. In addition, this past semester she was chosen as an adjunct professor of bilinugal education at the university level.

Staff Development

Staff members attended monthly workshops arranged by the coordinator during which program goals and objectives were discussed and reviewed. Outside speakers such as federal bilingual materials center staff were scheduled as resource persons. The monthly workshop programs were well organized and well attended. Many bilingual staff members expressed the viewpoint that the programs were important,

worthwhile and helpful.

Testing Program

The heavy testing program which often is decried in all funded programs represents what the district staff identifies as required of higher governmental authority. Accordingly, they should not be faulted for the structure.

Selection of specific instruments should be reviewed. Teaching staff is virtually unanimous that the Avanti test and the Prueba de Lectura are more suitable for youngsters "just off the boat" and less suitable for those youngsters--even LEP students--who have been here for an extended period of time.

The complete testing program will be presented and analyzed when the data is available.

Parent Involvement

Parents of children involved in the program have participated in the initial program planning, reviewed drafts, and prepared comments on the completed project.

During school visitations the evaluator had the opportunity to interview approximately two dozen parents of pupils in the bilingual program who were on premises to resolve problems, to visit teachers, to attend programs or who accompanied the evaluator as part of an official parent

assessment program sponsored by the district.

In general, the parents related well to all school staff. Obviously, they were drawn to bilingual staff members due to language problems.

With the exception of those parents who were trained and who participated in the official observation programs, all other parents indicated that their interactions with the school were restricted to resolving problems and attending official programs (plays, assemblies, fiestas, etc.). During the first year of operation of Project SELL, suitable initial steps were taken to orient parents. Parental attitudes--vital to the success of the program--are viewed as positive. The stage is set for a continued emphasis on outreach and a program of orientation and ESL for parents should be considered for the district during subsequent program recycling.

Based upon heavy visitation, the evaluator got to know many individual pupils and often participated in the program working with students in the role of teacher, paraprofessional and counselor.

The program functioned in a superior manner. Motivation of pupils was strong. Attendance records (classroom) showed almost perfect attendance when children were in school (no cutting). Attendance records (school) demonstrate that the program appears to be improving overall attendance.

The evaluator was impressed by the strong organization, absolute absence of discipline or control problems observed during classroom visitations, and strong evidence of superior control and management of the buildings as a whole.

One important component of the program--promoting broadened understanding of the language and Hispanic cultural heritage on the part of non-LEP students--was evident on a limited basis entirely suitable for the first year of program operation. Additional emphasis is anticipated during the next year.